Meeting Notes
Oregon Review Northwest Region - Entrance Interview
October 20, 2003 1:00 PM - 3:30 PM
Participants:
Neil Mullane, ODEQ, NW Region
Raj Kapur, ODEQ, NW Region
Lyle Christensen, ODEQ, NW Region
Mike Lidgard, EPA Region 10 NPDES Permits
Susan Poulsom, EPA Region 10 NPDES Permits
Rob Grandinetti, EPA Region 10 NPDES Compliance
Chris Cora, EPA Region 10 NPDES Compliance

Handouts:
ODEQ provided the following:
1. Northwest Region Division - Organizational Chart, 2 pages
2. Percent of Time in NPDES and percent in non-NPDES
3. Permit Issuance Schedule - Major
4. Permit Issuance Schedule - Mine

1. Regional Organization - See Organizational Chart
All NPDES permitting and compliance staff are in Water Quality Source Control/640. WQSC is currently borrowing two people from Water Quality Tech Assistance/650 - one for MS4 permit and a modeler for compliance.

2. Two regional offices Tillamook and Warrenton. No NPDES permitting done at offices.

3. Handout 1.

4. 6.0 FTE for permitting and compliance. see Handouts 1 and 2. One person to data management - Anne Hill. She logs that DMR is received, does not input data. DMRs are routed to permit writer. Each PW has their own way to track DMR data.

5. WQSC shares permit and compliance duties. The amount of time spent on permitting versus compliance varies. WQSC does both state permits and NPDES permits. Neil provided a breakdown of time spent on each (refer handout 2) This is a relative breakdown, current "best guess", it's not for budgeting purposes.

Permit writer/compliance FTE does no plan review. All plan reviews are done by one individual (David Mann).

Raj and Lyle thought sharing permit/compliance duties worked well. Because the assigned person really understood all aspects of the permitted facility.

6. Resources continue to go down. WQSC has taken several hits. Expect more staff cuts.

EPOC program was cut, affected permitting. Half of program funded by fees. They have two fees - permit fee and annual compliance determination fee.

7. Backlog. Each region has a backlog plan. See handout 3 and 4. Neil's confidence is high to eliminate backlog in 18 months. Enforcement and compliance are taking a backseat.

Causes of Backlogs

- Many permits remaining to be issued are for facilities discharging to water quality limited waters. Permits were pushed back, waiting for the TMDLs.

- The applicant review takes a long time. The official applicant review period is 14 days, however it has historically taken much longer. There are sometimes six transactions with the applicant before the public review period.

8. Intend to issue permits on a watershed basis.

Clean Water Services (CWS)
One permit is being written to cover four facilities plus 2 MS4s. CWS got an EPA grant to have a contractor write the permit. Permit issues will include DO, temperature, ammonia trading. Permit will concentrate on flow augmentation and shade. Trading will be between two of the CWS WWTPs - Durham and Rock Creek. "Trading" is used loosely - it's really a mitigation program. Will include a lot of instream sampling.

9. Annie Hill (Permits Coordinator) checks that the application is complete.

10. RP Analysis

The permit writer inputs DMR data for facility.
In general, there is minimal instream data available.

11. Whether or not a mixing zone is allowed, hinges on critical habitat. Previous permits have dimensions for mixing zones. DEQ does modeling to see what dilution is available. If appropriate, they keep the mixing zone.

12. An MAO is used. They identify that the permit will not meet the permit conditions. The facility is put under a schedule. Primarily used for WQBELs. The public notice of the MAO is written as part of the permit. The MAO is the enforcement, not the public notice.

In Oregon WQS, the standards for temperature and bacteria are fuzzy. In section 401, there is language that there can be a compliance schedule.

MAO for technology based limits for munis? ODEQ gives technology based limits for BOD, TSS, % removal. A situation in which a facility may get an MAO for technology based limits would be if the facility is reaching their design capacity.

17. Templates.

Mark Hamlin is a very useful contact for templates. There is a grant to DEQ Headquarters to look into a template for industrial permits.

18. DMR data aren't entered in. Individual permit writer looks at DMR data when it comes in.

20 . No tracking system for SSOs.

Beth and Lyle deal with compliance related SSO issues. Neil recalls that only one facility has tried to argue that an SSO was due to precipitation greater than the design storm (Oakland). They permittee later recanted. In these circumstances, a permittee must prove that an SSO is due to precipitation greater than the design storm.

21. All facilities are designed with a diversion structure. For most facilities, the design flow is generally the dry weather design capacity. The facility blends after the dry weather design flow is exceeded. Blending not addressed in the permit.

24. They go to permit writer's training - that's it. Lack of additional training is due to lack of resources. DEQ is looking into more in-house staff training.